

# CTR

**COMMUNITY TELEVISION REVIEW**

A Publication of the  
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Volume 16, Number 1

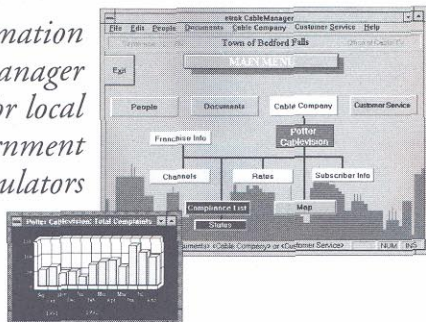


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*On the cover: "The Big Collaboration" – Photography and computer montage by John Haafke*

## Community Collaboration: A Call to Disarm

By T. Andrew Lewis, Executive Director, Alliance for Community Media

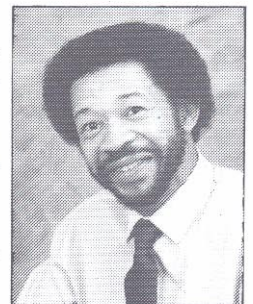
Today, the number of not-for-profit organizational names that include the term *association, coalition, federation, collective, consortium* or *congress* is unfathomable! And we are pleased. Why? Because this is evidence of the increasing tendency toward collaborative efforts. And collaborative efforts are the most efficient and effective – certainly more so than stand alone attempts at accomplishment.

Could there be, then, any downside to these joint ventures in the public interest? Unfortunately, far too frequently there is. It is a pernicious menace from within that eats at the longevity and well being of organizations and particularly of their human engines.

Those of us that fashion careers in public interest, community organizations are driven by commitment to causes. These causes inevitably require infinitely more resources to resolve than are at our disposal. Thus, traditionally, not-for-profits are often peopled by unproclaimed superhumans that are willing to work unlimited hours on unlimited numbers of formidable tasks and are unwilling to say no to a needed effort. Historically, this formula has resulted in successes that far outweigh the resources consumed. As one might expect, it also results in failures – the inability to satisfy the skyrocketing programmatic and personal demands and expectations.

This is the genesis of the psychosocial menace. Our inability to accomplish **all** of these humanly and organizationally impossible goals results in a war against ourselves – a progressive devaluing of our institutions and colleagues. Our shortcomings, no matter how understandable, becomes our subtitle. We take aim at our collective selves with battleground fervor. We are quick to join in group derision of our respective organizations and efforts. A feeding frenzy ensues. We are masters at self flagellation!

This is not a phenomenon unique to community based organizations. How often in human history have seen **and now see** targets of injustice turn their arms in rage on each other. Similarly, those that are served by our organizations (fellow community residents who often are disenfran-



*See Community Collaboration: A Call to Disarm – page 10*

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## Public Policy Update

*By Alan Bushong, Public Policy Chair*

### Alliance Joins Coalition Suit Against FCC Leased-Access Rules

On February 22, the Alliance joined the American Civil Liberties Union, People for the American Way, the Colorado-based '90s Channel and the Alliance for Communications Democracy in filing suits at the Federal Court of Appeals to challenge the constitutionality of new FCC regulations regarding leased access. FCC rules released in early February require operators to censor "indecent" programming.

The lawsuits challenge regulations required by Congress in Section 10 of the 1992 Cable Act, discussed in greater length in earlier CTR issues. The coalition asserts that the FCC regulations require cable operators to censor "indecent" programming on leased access, violating the First Amendment rights of producers and viewers by establishing a system of prior restraints on constitutionally-protected speech. The coalition has recently requested the court to stay the May 11 scheduled effective date for the leased access rules.

Indecent programming, defined by the FCC as material that "describes or depicts sexual or excretory activities or organs in a patently offensive manner as measured by contemporary community standards" is constitutionally protected speech because it does not meet the legal test for obscenity and because it often has serious political, literary or artistic value. Program issues such as gay rights, safe sex, sexual harassment and arts censorship may be sexually explicit, but are not obscene.

**An ominous sign for PEG access?** The Cable Act of 1992 also requires the FCC to establish rules to prohibit on PEG access channels "programming which contains obscene material, sexually explicit conduct, or material soliciting or promoting unlawful conduct." The Alliance position, communicated to the FCC during the rulemaking process, is that the only constitutional purpose of the regulations is to prevent children from viewing materials that their parents consider inappropriate. Lockboxes, which allow viewers to block access to channels, are the least-restrictive, and hence the only constitutional means of achieving the regulations' goal.

The FCC position on leased-access certainly exceeds this level of restriction. The Alliance and other members of the coalition are prepared to challenge any unacceptable PEG access rules in court.

**Time Warner.** Meanwhile, the Alliance and People for the American Way have filed a friend of the court memorandum in Time-Warner's lawsuit in which they oppose Time-Warner's challenge to the constitutionality of the PEG and leased access provisions of the 1984 and 1992 Cable Acts.

**Alliance Members Rising to the Challenge.** Through March, Alliance members have raised over \$12,000 for public policy initiatives. The following

*continued on page 4*

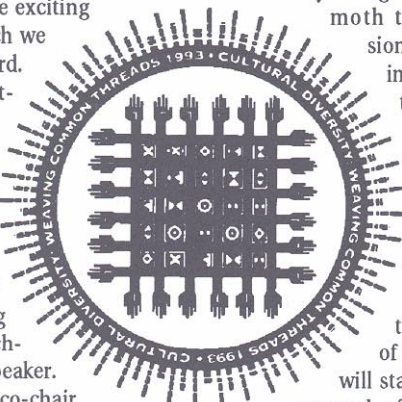
## Alliance for Community Media's Annual Convention Set for Atlanta

You may already know, the 1993 Alliance Convention and Trade Show is in Atlanta, Georgia. The theme is "Cultural Diversity: Weaving Common Threads." We are still working out arrangements, firming up commitments and identifying some particulars, but there are some exciting events to which we can look forward.

Former United Nations Ambassador and Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young has consented to be our Opening (Awards) Luncheon keynote speaker. Young is now co-chair

of the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games. He is a much sought-after international speaker and should provide convention attendees with interesting perspectives on our theme. We are actively pursuing President Jimmy Carter, Ted Turner and Benjamin Hooks for closing keynotes. We should know shortly.

The convention's theme party is taking shape. We have secured the historic Underground Depot as the locale for the dinner, and are planning a few surprises that include a



"railroad" motif, international foods and "culturally diverse" performances.

As an added attraction, we have included a participatory interactive weaving display. Each convention goer gets to tie a piece of fabric that

they bring onto a mammoth three-dimensional frame. Join in, and watch as the frame becomes transformed into a beautiful tapestry of our unity. A postscript to this activity is that a portion of the AIDS Quilt will stand along side our work-of-art.

Georgia Cable Television has arranged to carry the public access signal at the hotel during our stay, so, you'll be able to watch for workshops, Hometown contestants, and nationwide access programming on your hotel TV.

Well, I could go on and on, but ya'll will be here in July to see for yourself. Until then, think of a program for airing and some fabric for sharing.

-W. Chris Leonard,  
Local Planning Convention Chair

## CONNECTIONS

### Deep Dish '93 Spring Season Underway

Deep Dish TV's 1993 spring season is underway, but there's still plenty of programs coming off the bird to challenge the senses.

The season, which started in March, runs twice weekly through July 1 on Tuesdays from 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. with repeats on Thursdays from 5:00 - 6:00 p.m. All times are Eastern.

Most transmissions consist of two half-hour programs designed to be shown either as individual shows or back-to-back in a one-hour slot. Tuesday transmissions include PSAs between segments, while Thursday transmissions include color bars between programs.

The season "brings together fearless television from around the world. From South Africa to Latin America to the Middle East, people in struggle are using video in challenging ways to tell the truth about their lives."

Deep Dish has moved to a new home in the sky this spring and can be accessed off of Satellite C1, Transponder 17.

For a schedule of transmissions or further information, contact Deep Dish TV Network at 339 Lafayette Street, New York, NY 10012. Telephone 212/473-8933, fax 212/420.8223.

### Central States Donation to Expand CTR

Members will see an expanded Community Television Review in the issues ahead thanks to a commitment of \$5,000 during 1993 from the Central States Region of the Alliance to expand the magazine to a minimum 32 pages by the fall.

The contribution recognizes the importance of CTR to members and the need for additional pages for the organization and members to share information and stories.

### Call for Awards Nominations

Members should have received notice of the 1993 Alliance Awards. Presented at the national convention, they include the George Stoney Award for Humanistic Communications, the Buske Leadership Award, the Jewell Ryan-White Award for Cultural Diversity, and the Community Communications awards for Public and Institutional Access, and Local Origination.

Nominations are due by April 26. If you haven't received a notice, contact the national office.

### Accessing the Alliance

**Jobline.** For access jobs across America, or to post job openings, call (202) 393-2653.

**Bulletin Board.** To connect, call (217) 359-9118, and set your computer's modem to 300, 1200 or 2400 baud, 8 bits, 1 stop bit, no parity.

**National Office.** Call (202) 393-2650, fax (202) 393-2653, or write 666 11th St. NW, Suite 806, Washington, DC 20038-4542.

## Alliance for Community Media Spring Regional Conferences

### Midwest Regional Conference, May 14, 9-4 p.m.

Location: Naperville Municipal Center, 400 S. Eagle, Naperville, IL 60563

Contact: Dan Lloyd, Executive Director of Naperville Community Access Television, 800 West 5th Ave., Naperville, IL 60563. Telephone: (708) 355-2124.

Cost: \$45 (includes lunch). Will include a hands-on training session where you can produce your own video to bring home.

Theme - The Electronic Link: Using Public Access Television in Your Public Relations Efforts

### Far West Regional Conference, May 15-16 or 22-23 (not confirmed)

Location to be determined

Contact: Kari Peterson at Davis Community Television or Gerry Paulsen at (916) 878-2488.

Cost: No charge

Theme - Public Awareness Day: build alliances with communities that aren't already involved.

### Central States Regional Conference May 13-15 (see ad)

Location: Regency Campus Inn, Ann Arbor, MI

Contact: Ann Arbor Community Access Television (313) 769-7422

Cost: full conference \$55 members, \$60 non-members

Theme - "Adventures in Access"

### Northwest Regional Conference, April 23-24, starts at noon Friday

Location: Red Lion Inn, Yakima, Washington

Contact: Paula Thorton at Agewise for registration and info (503) 282-8634 or Brian Girtman at Portland Cable Access (503) 288-1515.

Theme - "Get Media Active", conference ends with "Best of Northwest" Awards Ceremony, Saturday at 7 p.m.

### Mountain States Regional Conference, April 23-25

Location: Friendship Inn, Central and 8th St., Albuquerque, NM

Contact: Penelope Place, Executive Director at Santa Fe Public Access, P.O. Box 4187, Santa Fe, NM 87501. Telephone: (505) 438-1321.

Cost: Full conference \$50 (ACM members), \$75 (non-members)

Theme - "Speaking for Ourselves: Defending Community Communications"

## International Update

By Karen Helmersen,  
International Committee Chair  
**Austria: A Community  
Without Communication?**

If you can imagine a community without access to electronic media, cable stations without studios for local production, national broadcast without independent programming, and alternative media centers without distribution networks, then you can imagine the environment for community media in Austria.

Aside from alternative media workshops and academic enclaves, there is very little evidence of community media activity in Austria. In concern of this, a symposium entitled FERNSEHEN DER DRITTEN ART (TV of the Third Kind) was recently held at the Hochschule für Angewandte Kunst (College of Applied Arts) in Vienna. The symposium, held in January, was organized by Der ARGE FREIE FREQUENZEN - OFFENE KANÄLE in conjunction with Dr. Hans Ulrich Reck of the department for Communications Theory at the Hochschule, and Zelko Wiener, as coordinator. The audience consisted primarily of students and media artists.

The object of the seminar was to explore various models for community media which might lead to an appropriate structure for access in Austria. STADTWERKSTATT, an alternative media group in Linz, was instrumental in shaping the agenda. Having spent three months in the United States, and having attended the first Video Olympics in France, Stadtwerkstatt felt that an international perspective was critical to the challenges facing non-commercial media interests in Austria. International models for facilitating community video production and dissemination were explored as a basis for discussion. The international guests included

David Garcia of Time Based Art in Amsterdam (primary coordinator of PARADISO), Jan Peters of Offener Kanal in Hamburg, Giles Oakley of the Community Programming Unit of the BBC, and Uwe Parpart of Offener Kanal in Bremen.

In addition to the daily sessions, videos were shown each evening at the Freihof, a combination coffeehouse and meeting place for students, activists and the avant garde. Works from PARADISO, Paper Tiger, Offener Kanal, etc., were all there and more. . .including tapes provided by Jesikah Ross of DCTV in Davis, California, ACTV Cable 21 in Columbus, Ohio, CTV on Staten Island, and Deep Dish TV Network out of New York.

The title of the seminar expresses the desire in Austria among media artists to have a "third kind" of television programming, "something between the ORF (national broadcast) and commercial cable". At present, it appears impossible to obtain licensing which allows independent locally produced cablecasting, commercial or non-commercial. The Postal Authority, branch of the Austrian government which oversees all communications systems, is described as extremely monopolistic. The ORF itself is an exceptionally closed system. Through the efforts of organizations like TRANSIT and Heidi Grundmann, however, artists' works have been broadcast nationally during ORF program breaks. This type of activity has been limited though, and does not reflect a general receptivity to the idea of independent works on Television.

Bordered by western Europe, which is demonstrating increasing leadership in the development of community TV, and greatly influenced at all levels by Germany, its immediate neighbor (where Open Channels are abundant), the Austrian community seems to be suffering from an odd crisis of "media identity". While the proposal of public access is widely supported by academics, media artists and

activists, the concepts of community communication, free speech and diversity are not. There was tremendous debate throughout the symposium on what type of access would be best for Austria. The issue of content versus structure, which in this case translates to quality programming versus free speech and diversity, created a major obstacle to reaching any conclusions. Primarily fueled by the concerns of media artists, panel discussions revealed that of all the options presented, no one model was entirely appropriate. Austria would have to create her own form of access. But how?

Further discussion revealed that in order to establish public access the alternative media community in Austria might have to do something it has never done before, and that is collaborate. Many people felt that the history of rule by monarchy was partly responsible for shaping a society unaccustomed to the idea of collaborating, a culture where people "receive and do not send", a society of non-communicating communities. Others felt that economic conditions in Austria contributed to a sense of "false comfort", that the standard of living throughout Austria is high, and therefore engenders a culture of self interests and complacency. One proposal from an audience member was to create different forms of access for different groups.

Groups such as STADTWERKSTATT and ARGE, however, demonstrate another segment of the populace which is determined to advance the use of telecommunications within their own borders. They understand the fundamentals critical to success as well. They see themselves in the position of securing a public right which is antithetical to centuries of Austrian culture. In order to do so, they are beginning to realize the value of strategic organizing, the need for coalition building and the importance of legislation.

By the end of the symposium, two primary camps evolved behind these talks which seem to be at friendly odds with each other. The majority of participants agree that a need for public access to communications media at the local level exists, and that the process of developing a mechanism for access will be problematic. But the decision as to which form of access is best, remains a big challenge. What will it be? Community communications centers which incorporate rights of free speech and issues of diversity or community television which provides access but with perimeters that ensure "quality programming", or both? Maybe Austria will, after all, resolve these issues by creating her own form of access, *community media of the third kind*.

*Karen Helmersen attended Fernsehen Der Dritten Art in January as a guest speaker and representative of the Alliance for Community Media. For more information on the symposium or community media in Austria, contact: Georg Ritter, STADTWERKSTATT Kirchengasse 4, 4040 Linz, Austria Telephone: 0732 23 12 09 and Fax: 0732 23 23 09 16.*

*Karen is Director of Finance at Film/Video Arts, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003. Telephone (212) 673-9361.*

## Public Policy Update

*Continued from page 2*

have contributed \$200 or more. Additional contributors will be listed in the next issue.

\$200	Alex Quinn	
\$250	Alliance NE Illinois Chapter	Shrewsbury Public Access
\$300	Central States Region	Tipp-Monroe Cable Access Commission
\$400	Cambridge Community TV	Alliance Michigan Chapter
\$500	Alliance Minnesota Chapter	Cincinnati Community Video
	Thurston Community TV	Cape Cod TV
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	Somerville Community TV	Abigail Norman
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\$1,000	Newton Cable Access Corporation	Capital Community TV (Salem, OR)
	Waycross Community Television	

The Alliance will continue fundraising efforts at Spring Regional Conferences. To date, the 1992 Northeast Fall Regional Conference has been the most successful fundraising event.

The work of each Alliance member at the local level remains a key to public policy success. When we are able to educate and empower the organizations and individuals using the community TV to stand up for their communication rights, our public policy initiatives will be successful.

*Alan Bushong is Executive Director of Capital Community Television, 585 Liberty St., Salem, OR 97308-2342. Telephone (503) 588-2288.*

## *Still Only a Promise?*

# The Promise of Progressive Media

By Nan Rubin

When the Veatch Program invited me to research what, if any collaborations existed between progressive media outlets and some of the grassroots organizing groups funded by Veatch, I was enthusiastic about the possibilities.

Most social change foundations like Veatch 'don't fund media' because they don't see it as a legitimate social change force in and of itself. To them media is only as a mechanism to support *other* groups engaged in "real" community organizing. But I have been a community radio activist for more than twenty years because I have an unshakable belief that community-based media is a lynch-pin in both building and reinforcing social change movements – when the media itself understands that its primary mission is to serve its *audience* and not merely be an outlet for community organizations.

Successful media collaborations have resulted between community organizers and community producers when there is an understanding of the dynamic connection an outlet has with its audience through its programming – a synergism most often achieved by accident rather than by design. As for the media itself, the instances of community radio stations and public access centers working together have been occasional at best, most often because it simply doesn't occur to either the radio people or the video people to work together.

The exceptions can be very exciting. I recently served as Local Producer for "Slow Death in the Cities," a live two-hour radio panel and call-in focused on the urban environment. The program was one in a series of Radio Town Halls produced by Pacifica Radio and distributed nationally over the public radio satellite. Because of the hot subject, people from several access groups including Deep Dish Television, Staten Island Community Television, and the Telecommunications Department of the Borough of Manhattan Community College (where the broadcast would originate) approached me about carrying it on video. Thanks to the commitment of many staff and volunteers and the willingness of everyone to compromise, this radio-only program was transformed into a successful joint radio/television collaboration which was broadcast live nationally not only over public radio, but also on satellites for cable access channels and public television stations simultaneously from coast to coast.

That night, the program literally blanketed the country, which was enormously satisfying. But advance publicity had been done only for radio stations; we had no way to publicize the program much ahead of time to television and cable viewers so there was no way to know what outlets would be picking up the program or who might be able to watch it.

It was one opportunity gained, but another one lost. Which led to the main question Veatch wanted me to examine – if the impact of progressive media on social change movements is through its ability to expose audiences to social change issues, then how do we expand our audiences? And, once people become audience members, how do we keep them?

**Articulating Some Underlying Assumptions.** With support from Veatch, I started with four basic assumptions:

**1. Compelling programming is essential.** Our programming is largely driven by politics, and from the coverage of the Gulf War to specials on the Quincentenary, audiences listen to our radio stations and watch our video programs because the programming is important to them. We can be proud of a long history of outstanding media productions, but we must never lose sight of the fact that ultimately, programming is the only thing audience members care about.

**2. Political issues of grassroots organizers are rich in program possibilities,** which means exposing these issues over our channels to thousands of potential new activists. Conversely, constituencies already involved with social change movements seem to provide natural pools of potential new listeners and viewers.

**3. People who are viewers of public access and community TV are also likely supporters of community radio stations, and vice versa.** In communities where such multiple media outlets exist, audience building might come from cross-promotion and collaborative projects.

**4. Audiences have to know when programming will be on in order to watch or listen.** "If you air it, they will watch" – ONLY if they know when it will be on!! Building a

## *About this issue...*

### Community & Collaboration

For some reason collaboration doesn't seem to come naturally to people. Instinct rules intellect and fight or flight responses fracture fusion. Humankind's most shining examples of collaborative efforts seem to center around war. We must change that.

In this issue, we blatantly attempt to entice you into the notion that a more rewarding, effective and fruitful future rests in the hands of sharing. Collaboration needs constant kindling in our consciousness as world-wide wires and signals cinch the globe tighter. Collaboration needs to be sought unrelentingly as the amalgam slush of blending technology splatters in our face. Collaboration taught as "religion" can insure the hegemony of harmony.

Community Media and Access Centers are in unique spots because they serve across traditional lines of distinction. Most every human can "drink" at the well of media center services. With the continual challenges against free speech and expression and the imminent decision on the U.S. telecommunication infrastructure, the need for like-minded groups to unite is more critical than ever. Obvious clichés ring with new truth. "There is strength in numbers", "the whole is more than the sum of its parts", "united we stand, divided we fall".

Our commercial counterparts have heeded these calls with unprecedented collaborations between dozens of the Fortune 500 club. Phone companies are talking to cable forging a new mix called "phable". McCaw and his Cellular One giant has sold off 33 per cent to AT&T, a former arch rival. A low key but phenomenal group of six mega corporations has united to form General Magic, a company designed to integrate voice, distance and software. Ted Turner has an impressive record of crawling into bed with any and every company that can benefit him. Even the broadcasting big three has seen the writing on the wall (in red ink) and decided this thing called cable isn't so bad and they ought to cooperate more. It's always amazing how ready people are to cooperate when their back is against the wall.

One "advantage" our commercial brothers and sisters have in their new found zeal to cooperate is a simple mission shared by all. "Make a lot more money than you spend." With a bottom line concept like that, diverse companies can focus like a laser on ways to share resources and power to reach that goal. Fortunately and unfortunately we non-profit activists have a thousand and one different missions that we fight hard to achieve. We mistakenly turn against each other some times due to a lack of "big picture shared mission".

Read on in this issue as authors explain models of cooperative community, detail complex efforts to share resources to reach new audiences and unite diverse groups around a common cause.

— Dirk Koning / Heidi Mau, Editors-in-Chief

*continued next page*

steady audience is based on people knowing what to expect, so it is a service to let viewers and listeners know when programs will air. With so much dial twisting and channel zapping, catching audiences hit or miss is not enough; promotion is critical to audience-building and retention.

Guided by these assumptions, I needed to learn what groups were actually doing. I contacted nearly sixty organizations around the country from three different types of groups:

- community radio and television stations;
- cable access and production centers;
- grassroots groups organizing around specific social change issues [including de-industrialization, toxics and hazardous waste, civil rights and racism, and women's health.]

I asked about their experiences working with each other, their attitudes about promoting their programming and their issues, and the media campaigns they considered their most successful in terms of mobilizing people or attracting new members, etc.

**The Findings Were Mixed.** Most of the responses were not surprising, but they do point out some major shortcomings in our operations.

**Promotion really works to attract audiences, but it isn't done consistently.** Media groups generally consider it expensive and time consuming, and thus a low priority. Few outlets have any staff or budget dedicated to promotional activity, forcing groups to look for exchanges and such inexpensive promotional devices as free listings or having their schedules included in the local weekly newspapers. When they can, groups do take out paid advertisements in newspapers or on commercial cable channels, but most promotion is an afterthought.

Sadly, almost *none* of the media outlets I spoke with used their own air on a regular basis to promote their own program schedule. City TV of Santa Monica, for example, has program listings distributed regularly in their local newspapers and often buys small ads, but they don't run a regular program schedule themselves. So, while lack of funds is mentioned frequently for not doing more promotion, in fact – our own channels, the single 'free' resource which we have most control over and which is most effective in reaching our existing audiences – isn't being used aggressively at all.

**Successful local [and national] joint media campaigns have been shaped by media producers approaching the political organizations and not the other way around.** Most progressive groups would be delighted to have community media focus on their issue, but their idea of 'media' almost always means getting news coverage of their concerns and little more. Successful joint programming depends on video or radio producers to control the media concept and format, while the organizing groups supply the political content.

Even while most of their media efforts are aimed at commercial outlets, however, grassroots organizers feel that progressive media does not turn to them nearly enough for expertise, resources, analysis of issues, and provocative programming topics. Many organizations I spoke with repeated what I heard from Lois Gibbs at the Citizens Clearinghouse for Hazardous Waste which works with more than 7,000 rural and low-income groups on issues such as fighting plant emissions and toxic mining waste, who said they were rarely, if ever, contacted by progressive media producers. What contact they have is only "a little with community access."

**Constituency groups have proven to be fertile sources of new audiences.** When WPFW Radio in Washington D.C. produced an extended special on AIDS education, they worked with several local AIDS groups to both produce the program and help promote it in their newsletters. The program, which was also simulcast on one of the local commercial radio stations, brought a large enthusiastic number of new listeners to the station as well as garner publicity in the local press. [Keeping them listening, though, is another matter...]

**Very few outlets have engaged in extended programming campaigns focused on a single issue or cluster of issues.** Programming, even on hot topics, is generally produced as one-time only specials or short-term series. Almost no outlet has sustained a long-term focus on a single program or issue [i.e. six months or more] allowing it enough time to attract and hold an audience based on that programming. The exception cited by both broadcasters and cablecasters was ongoing coverage of

*...grassroots organizers feel that progressive media does not turn to them nearly enough for expertise, resources, analysis of issues, and provocative programming topics. Many organizations repeated what I heard from Lois Gibbs at the Citizens Clearinghouse for Hazardous Waste which works with more than 7,000 rural and low-income groups on issues such as fighting plant emissions and toxic mining waste, who said they were rarely, if ever, contacted by progressive media producers. What contact they have is only "a little with community access."*

the Gulf War. While unanticipated, this long-term programming on a single issue clearly drew in substantial new audiences.

**Cross-promotion between independently-controlled local radio outlets and cable access centers or community television stations is rare and what has been done has been met with mixed success.** KUVU Radio and KBDI-TV in Denver do engage in occasional joint productions which include cross-promotion, but neither station feels that it has substantially increased its audience. More common is the situation where there is no contact between the two (or more) outlets which exist in the same town or signal area.

**Some Simple Changes Can Lead to Big Improvements.** Most progressive media outlets are hand-to-mouth operations which have a small paid staff and rely heavily on volunteers for studio operations and program production. Which means that while we understand the need for sustained program planning and promotion, we rarely feel we have the means to institutionalize it, even on our own media channels.

Combine that with an often unformed sense of who our audience is or who we would like them to be, and we still have a ways to go to become less producer-driven and more audience driven in our overall activities. Even so, some simple changes are well within reach.

- Promotion must become a higher priority;
- We have to use our own outlets much more consistently for promoting our programming;
- We need to plan longer-term program strategies to build our audiences;
- We can't wait for issues or groups to walk in the door. As media producers, we should be aggressive in approaching local and national organizers to help us develop timely programming initiatives responsive to community interests;
- Local outlets should be in contact with each other to encourage opportunities for cross-promotion.

Based on more detailed findings from the ascertainment, the next step is to outline several different pilot plans for audience expansion which can address some of the issues outlined above. We are outlining these out now, so stay tuned. The Progressive Media Promotion Project might be coming to YOUR town!

*Nan Rubin has been involved with community media programming, policy and broadcast operations for more than 20 years, including having built two community radio stations and serving on the staff of the National Federation of Community Broadcasters for six years.*

*Through her consulting company, Community Media Services, she assists media organizations, broadcast stations and non-profit groups in a range of organizational needs, including feasibility studies, promotion, facilities planning, community participation, project management, program evaluation, marketing, and policy analysis. Nan is a founding member of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) and is currently a member of the board of the Native American Public Broadcasting Consortium and WBAI Radio in New York City. She can be reached at Community Media Services, 121 W. 27th St., #1202A, New York, NY 10001, 212/463-7411 voice; 212/229-2557 fax; Internet address, nanrubin@log.org.*

# Community and Collaboration:

## *Working with other organizations in responding to the Censorship Provisions of the 1992 Cable Act and the Time Warner Lawsuit*

By Jim Horwood

The Alliance initiated a collaborative effort with other organizations concerned with preserving a forum on cable for the public to be able to communicate freely. The Alliance is working with the Alliance for Communications Democracy, the American Civil Liberties Union and People for the American Way.

**FCC Regulations.** The Cable Television Consumer Protection Act of 1992 requires (in Section 10) that the FCC adopt regulations designed (1) to restrict access of children to indecent programming on leased channels and (2) to permit cable operators to prohibit the use of PEG access facilities for any programming "which contains obscene material, sexually explicit conduct, or material soliciting or promoting unlawful conduct." The FCC issued a single notice setting forth proposed rules and regulations for both leased and PEG access and providing for comments on its proposals. The Alliance and the other organizations submitted joint comments that the Community Antenna Television Association described as "exhaustive and persuasive." Our joint comments (and reply comments) were by far the most comprehensive and complete of any of the commenters. The FCC issued rules and regulations dealing with leased access only on February 3, and will issue PEG rules and regulations separately (the 1992 Cable Act requires PEG rules and regulations to be issued no later than April 3). Throughout its report and order dealing with leased access, the FCC referred to and discussed the Alliance's comments.

The censorship scheme adopted by the FCC requires a program provider requesting access on a leased access channel to certify if its program contains any description of sexual activity that could be considered offensive. Cable operators may ban such programs, despite the provision in the 1984 Cable Act that "[a] cable operator shall not exercise any editorial control over any video programming provided" over leased access cable channels. If such a program is not banned, it must be segregated onto a separate channel, whose signal is scrambled and will only be unscrambled thirty days after a subscriber's written request.

The FCC's leased access rules and regulations have been appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit in two separate actions — one by the Alliance, the ACD and People For, and the other by the ACLU and the '90s Channel (a leased access program provider serving subscribers in six states). The principal thrust of the appeals are that the FCC's order, as well as the implicated portions of Section 10 of the 1992 Act, violates the First and Fifth Amendments and is seriously disruptive to leased access programming and the value that it brings to local communities across the country. Moreover, it works this mischief without adding anything to the current requirement that cable operators to make lockboxes available to all cable subscribers so that

they may lock out any channel or program that they choose. The FCC and the courts have previously recognized that lockboxes are an effective, content-neutral way for parents to prevent their children from being exposed to programming they deem inappropriate.

Although the direct interests of the Alliance and the ACD concern PEG access rather than leased access, the leased access order is important because many of the findings in the FCC's orders, if allowed to stand, will impair the viability of PEG access if, as we expect, they are carried forward into PEG rules and regulations. Another concern is that the censorship schemes for both leased and PEG access should be reviewed together by the same court in the same case because of their general commonality. We have asked the Court of Appeals to stay the FCC's rules and regulations pending its review.

**Time Warner Lawsuit.** Time Warner filed a lawsuit in federal court in November seeking to have a number of provisions of the 1984 and 1992 Cable Acts, including the PEG and leased access provisions, declared unconstitutional. Time Warner contends that the access provisions abridge its editorial discretion by forcing it to carry programming it would not otherwise carry and use up channel capacity that would otherwise be available to it. Among Time Warner's challenges was to Section 10(d) of the 1992 Act, which eliminated the statutory exemption under the 1984 Act from liability for programming carried on access channels that "involves obscene material." The Alliance joined the ACD, the City of Los Angeles, Richmond (Indiana) Power & Light and the Media Access Project in a friend of the court brief opposing Time Warner's request for a preliminary injunction. Time Warner's preliminary injunction request was denied by the federal district court, which provided for briefing and oral argument on Time Warner's motion to invalidate various sections of the Cable Acts.

On February 12, the Alliance and People For filed a friend of the court memorandum in response to Time Warner's summary judgment request, arguing that the court should abstain from considering Time Warner's constitutional challenge to Section 10(d) because the constitutionality of Section 10 as a whole should be considered by a U.S. Court of Appeals upon review of the FCC's censorship rulemaking orders. The ACD filed a separate memorandum arguing that the court should deny Time Warner's summary judgment motion. The ACLU, on the other hand, filed in support of the request to have Section 10(d) declared unconstitutional.

**Advantages and Pitfalls of Collaboration.** The advantages of collaboration are substantial: sharing of resources; sharing of ideas; harmonizing of views (if possible) to make a unified presentation; and enhanced impact on decisionmakers of the views of well regarded organizations representing significant elements of the

## Advantages & Pitfalls

The advantages of collaboration are substantial: sharing of resources; sharing of ideas; harmonizing of views (if possible) to make a unified presentation; and enhanced impact on decisionmakers of the views of well regarded organizations representing significant elements of the public. The pitfalls of the kind of collaborative efforts involved in the FCC rulemaking proceeding (and appeals) and the Time Warner litigation fall into two categories: first, the logistics of coordinating the views (sometimes disparate) of a number of (strong-willed) lawyers and, second, dealing with differences of positions among the organizations. Because of the size of the tasks faced by the Alliance and the severe time deadlines, the collaboration was critical to the quality and effectiveness of the activities undertaken.

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## Successful Collaborations

"Successful Collaborations" is the title of a new column in the publication *Nonprofit World Updates*, published by the Society for Nonprofit Organizations.

If you have a collaboration success story you'd like to share, contact: Editor, *Nonprofit World Updates*, 6314 Odana Road, Suite 1, Madison, WI 53719, or fax at 608/274-9978.

The Society also offers a book called *Collaboration: What Makes It Work*, published by the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, which details six key factors influencing successful collaborations. For more information on the book, contact the Society's Resource Center at 800/424-7367.



Members of Deep Dish collaborated with students and community residents to produce a video on the theme of immigration/integration that was screened in site-specific installations along with other Paper Tiger videos.

The project was presented in collaboration with Somerville Community Access Television and funded in part by the Somerville Arts Council and the Access Consortium, whose members include Somerville, Cape Cod Community Access, Malden Community Access, New TV, Boston Film/Video Foundation, and the Space Gallery.

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public. The pitfalls of the kind of collaborative efforts involved in the FCC rulemaking proceeding (and appeals) and the Time Warner litigation fall into two categories: first, the logistics of coordinating the views (sometimes disparate) of a number of (strong-willed) lawyers and, second, dealing with differences of positions among the organizations. Because of the size of the tasks faced by the Alliance and the severe time deadlines, the collaboration was critical to the quality and effectiveness of the activities undertaken. The FCC's proposed censorship regulations were released on November 10, 1992, with comments and reply comments due on December 7 and December 21. People For and the Media Access Project located the Washington, D.C. law firm of Shea and Gardner to provide pro bono representation in preparing comments to the FCC. Majorie Heins, Director of the ACLU's Arts Censorship Project, Andrew Schwartzman of the Media Access Project, Elliot Minberg of People For the American Way, Joe Van Eaton and I all provided input, suggestions and criticisms in what turned out to be very forceful and comprehensive comments. An issue that could have divided the group was the kinds of certifications as to program content that can be legitimately required from programmers and whether certain kinds of programming can be zoned to later hours. It was unnecessary to deal with these issues in either the initial or reply comments. The ACLU is concerned, however, that it may be necessary to address these issues in the appeals from the FCC's censorship rules and regulations. Because the ACLU's position on the outer edges of issues would likely be different from the views of many members of the Alliance and ACD, separate appeals were filed so that separate positions could be taken in court if deemed necessary. The coalition that has been established will try to work together to minimize, and we hope avoid, differences or inconsistencies.

The different positions taken in Time Warner<sup>1</sup> were due to disagreements as to tactics. The ACLU's decision to seek an injunction of the enforcement of Section 10(d) was considered unnecessary and risky by the Alliance, People For and the ACD. The Alliance, People

For and the ACD all argue that the federal district court should abstain from considering Time Warner's constitutional challenge to Section 10(d) because that section cannot be meaningfully evaluated until the FCC adopts regulations for PEG access and because the review of the FCC's regulations and of Section 10(d) lies solely with a U.S. Court of Appeals. The Alliance and People For believed it important to present the district court with its views as to why Section 10 as a whole was unconstitutional in case the judge did not accept the argument that he should abstain from considering the constitutionality of Section 10(d). The ACD on the other hand pointed out that Section 10(d) would be constitutional "if it were construed to grant cable operators immunity from liability unless knowledge of obscenity is established through an operator's awareness that a particular PEG access program has been held to be obscene in a prior judicial determination in the same community that would prevent the program from being shown."

Although none of the organizations that collaborated in filing joint comments in the FCC's censorship rule-making would be upset if any of the others' positions were accepted by the district court in the Time Warner case, their disagreements as to tactics for best defeating Time Warner's frontal assault on the constitutionality of access has prevented a single collaborative effort in Time Warner. I don't believe that these disagreements will impair the very good working relationship that has been developed. I expect that effective collaboration will continue for the most part as we strive to preserve the common objective of preserving a forum for the public to communicate on cable.

<sup>1</sup> The initial time constraint in Time Warner was even more severe than in the FCC censorship rulemaking proceeding. The brief in opposition to the motions for preliminary injunction was due (and filed) on November 24, with Joe Van Eaton taking the lead in representing the interests of the Alliance and its collaborators.

*Jim Horwood is a partner in the Washington, D.C. law firm of Spiegel & McDiarmid, 1350 New York Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005-4798. Telephone: (202) 879-4002. He has served on the Board of Directors of the Alliance for Community Media since 1989.*

## The Players on the Hill

THE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES  
which deal with telecommunications issues are:

### The House of Representatives: Energy and Commerce Committee

John Dingell, Chair - Room 2125 Rayburn House Office Bldg., Washington, DC 20515-6115 (202) 225-2927.

### The House Subcommittee on Telecommunications and Finance

Edward J. Markey, Chairman - 316 Ford House Office Bldg., Washington DC 20515, (202) 226-2424.

### The Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee

Ernest J. Hollings, Chair - Room SDOB-508 Washington DC 20515 (202) 224-5115.

### The Senate Communications Subcommittee

Daniel Inouye, Chair - SHOB-227, Washington DC 20515 (202) 224-9340.

## National Coalition of Independent Public Broadcasting Producers (NCIPBP)

By Fred Johnson

The existence of the National Coalition of Independent Public Broadcasters reflects a gathering consensus among independent producers regarding access to funding and the air waves of the Public Broadcasting Service. The coalition serves to voice the public policy concerns of independent producers and media activists, concerns for democratic access to broadcasting, cultural diversity, technology and public participation in emerging telecommunications structures.

NCIPBP has represented independent producers through the years of collaborative activism, networking and issue linking that have resulted in federal legislation creating the Independent Television Service (ITVS) in 1988. The Independent Television Service is a Congressionally mandated organization that contracts with the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to fund independently produced programs for public television. The service is governed by a board of independents and representatives from public broadcasting. The National Coalition, NCIPBP, has the important role of nominating ITVS Board members each year.

ITVS, which represents a major victory for independents in their struggle to open up the Public Broadcasting Service, receives a minimum of \$6 million a year by Congressional appropriation to carry out this task. Community media people will find the policy underpinnings for this kind of broadcasting initiative quite familiar. Congress amended the "Declaration of Policy" for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to read, "It is in the public interest to encourage the devel-

opment of programming that involves creative risks and that addresses the needs of unserved and underserved audiences, particularly children and minorities."

Despite this major victory for independent producers and advocates of diversity in broadcasting, the structure of broadcasting grows increasingly less open. For example, Public Television continues to centralize production internally in its efforts to create more high impact series and individual programs, in an attempt to try to compete with the commercial networks. Which means less diversity and fewer opportunities for small independent producers.

These developments and attacks on the whole institution of Public Television by the extreme right are compelling independent producers to continue to campaign in wider and wider sectors of society. Everyone understands that efforts to create more democratic media structures must extend far beyond the boundaries of any particular group or policy player.

Since the summer of 1992 the National Coalition and representatives from NAMAC, AIVF, the Minority Consortia for PBS and many others have been discussing the possibility of some kind of national telecommunications coalition. Recently the Alliance for Community Media's Public Policy Committee chair, Alan Bushong, joined that discussion. Perhaps the old idea of a national telecommunications coalition is one whose time may be finally approaching.

Producer membership organizations, association and advocacy groups with a minimum of 10 members are eligible to become voting members of NCIPBP. The Coalition's Board is chaired by Lillian Jemenez. Requests for information: NCIPBP, 1 Donna Ave., NY, NY 10956, 914/634-5251.

*Fred Johnson is vice chair of NCIPBP. He may be reached at 816 Greer Ave., Covington, KY 41011. Telephone 606/581-0033. Fax 606/581-0009.*



### Collaboration Video Available

There is a video tape on collaborative organization available from a conference session held last summer at the Alliance for Community Media's annual convention in St. Paul, MN. The session, titled *Community Communications Collaborations*, featured directors from the following groups explaining their organization and collaborative possibilities: Alliance for Communications Democracy, Alliance for Community Media, Deep Dish TV, Paper Tiger TV, Independent Television Service, National Federation for Community Broadcasters, Electronic Frontier Foundation, Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility, and the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors.

To order a copy of the session, send ten dollars and the title to Kari Peterson, Davis Community Television, 1623 25th St., Suite A, Davis, CA 95616.

### Albert on the Ultimate Collaboration

When we survey our lives and endeavors, we soon observe that almost the whole of our actions and desires is bound up with the existence of other human beings. We notice that our whole nature resembles that of the social animals. We eat food that others have produced, wear clothes that others have made, live in houses that others have built. The greater part of our knowledge and beliefs has been communicated to us by other people through the medium of a language which others have created. Without language our mental capacities would be poor indeed, comparable to those of the higher animals; we have, therefore, to admit that we owe our principal advantage over the beasts to the fact of living in human society. The individual, if left alone from birth, would remain primitive and beastlike in his thoughts and feelings to a degree that we can hardly conceive. The individual is what he is and has the significance that he has not so much in virtue of his individuality, but rather as a member of a great human community, which directs his material and spiritual existence from the cradle to the grave."

—Albert Einstein

# Not Channel Zero Media Producers, Media Critics

By Kim Deterline

In the past, independent video producers and critics challenging media bias often worked in two distinct areas of media activism: Producers built and promoted alternatives to mainstream media, while critics pushed for media reform. New York's Not Channel Zero video collective is one of the few media activist organizations engaged in both independent media production and sophisticated media criticism.

In 1990, this group of independent video producers came together to deal with issues of concern to African Americans and Latinos, and to empower those communities to challenge corporate media distortions and create media in their own voice. To achieve these goals, activists at Not Channel Zero produce video documentaries, organize community screenings and run media activist workshops.

"A lot of people in our communities," says collective member Art Jones, "don't feel mainstream media are relevant to them. They only see their communities covered when they are being portrayed negatively or when people who aren't from their communities speak for them." Few groups are more misrepresented by the media with more serious results than people of color, who are consistently stereotyped as criminal and dangerous.

"Especially in communities that don't have a voice and are already subject to institutionally supported pre-judice," Jones says, "these kind of distortions can have a life-and-death effect because of the way they reinforce misconceptions. These misconceptions result directly in police and other violence."

The collective has produced videos on topics

*Part media criticism, part video montage, Not Channel Zero productions challenge mainstream media producers' notion that expensive production makes more persuasive media. . . Mixing a fast paced production style with perspective not heard in mass media, and incorporating the music and messages of popular rappers such as Ice Cube, Public Enemy and Ice-T, the collective produces news in the voice of young African Americans and Latinos.*

ranging from the iconography of Malcolm X to homophobia in the African-American community. The *Nation Erupts* is a documentary produced by Not Channel Zero on media coverage of the Rodney King verdict uprising. By juxtaposing clips of racist media coverage with ordinary people critiquing the coverage, the video invites viewers to take on the role of commentator as well.

Part media criticism, part video montage, Not Channel Zero productions challenge mainstream media producers' notion that expensive production makes more persuasive media. The programs make use of striking low budget techniques – like repeated back-and-forth video clips, a visual analogy to the "scratching" in rap music. Mixing a fast paced production style with perspective not heard in mass media, and incorporating the music and messages of popular

rappers such as Ice Cube, Public Enemy and Ice-T, the collective produces news in the voice of young African Americans and Latinos.

Activists at Not Channel Zero feel it is crucial to empower youth before they decide the news media are irrelevant to them. Hoping to train a new wave of youth that has the tools and the determination to demand a voice in media coverage, collective members recently embarked on a series of media activist trainings for junior high and high school students in low-income communities of color in New York.

The students analyze and articulate the bias in new reports in order to experience the role of media critic. Hands-on video production instruction combines with workshops on media theory and field trips to independent organizations involved in media production or criticism. "The larger goal," says Jones, "is to get these people to view all media, even media produced by us, critically."

Not Channel Zero illustrates how different strategies of media activism can support each other: Building and promoting alternative media helps put pressure on mainstream news outlets, while empowering people to recognize and challenge bias demonstrates the need for alternative sources. Not Channel Zero recognizes that it's crucial to empower people with both the tools to demand a voice in mainstream media coverage and the skills to create media in their own voice.

*To bring Not Channel Zero videos to your community, contact Art Jones at 718-625-6048. P.O. Box 186, Cornell Station, Bronx, NY 10473.*

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## Community Collaborations: A Call to Disarm

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chised, the economically disadvantaged, the media-less) direct their assault on us in frustration because we are less than perfect. Increasing demands coupled with decreasing (perhaps vanishing) resources saturate us with frustration causing us to attack our organizations, ourselves and our colleagues.

This form of self annihilation is vicious and highly communicable. It can rapidly become the most apparent organizational culture, often doing double duty as a mode of personal empowerment or respite for some. The focus is always an overview of shortcomings. Achievements acquired in the face of insuperable odds are forgotten. We are in attack readiness. Individual senses of accomplishment, self worth and respect are eroded resulting in what is a widely experienced battleground malady – burnout.

Sounds painfully familiar, huh? Well, acknowledgment is not nearly enough. The time has come for a cease fire. **Stop it. Now!** We must lay down these suicidal arms. Though always present, these acts of warfare – treason – against sustained social progress have become our most vehement enemy. And strangely enough, **we all recognize this fact**, yet continue to permit or participate in this assault which diminishes our organi-

zations and those who people them. We would declare all-out war on any entity other than ourselves that dared launch such an attack.

As we join forces to pursue our collaborative campaigns, make special effort to address this built-in, bellicose culprit. We select organizations for collaboration based upon their successes, strengths and potential. Focus upon those. Certainly, assess the weaknesses, but don't dwell there. Demand accountability and excellence. But keep strong touch with reality. Understand the "why" behind the deficiencies. Permit your eyes to rest on achievement as well as deficits in desired progress. Those of us in this arena are all keenly aware of our own organizational and personal shortcomings, and engage in more than sufficient self criticism and analysis. Also keep in mind that this is an era of new, objective based kinships. Many of our collaborators in the community may indeed be those from the commercial sector. Their organizational psyches are not rooted in our brand of self hatred. We should project to ourselves and to them the true measure of accomplishment and value that is ours. As I have said on many occasions, we – both as organizations and as individuals – have all done well against staggering odds!

Maximize the richness and potential of these collective ventures with our community associates and colleagues. This issue will provide insights into the process.

Here's to our renewed inner peace and collective successes.

## Collaboration Example Extraordinaire

By Heidi Mau

When researching the subject of communications collaborations, the buzzword on everyone's lips seems to be a collaboration effort forming in Denver, Colorado. In fact, the Five Points Media Center in Denver has recently announced that the effort is now a reality with the formation of their first collaborative course "The Emerging Role of Women and People of Color in Radio and Television" and the announcement that their renovated bakery building will be open in November of 1993.

The renovated building, located in Denver's Five Points neighborhood, is scheduled to house public television station KBDI-TV, public radio station KUVO-FM and Denver Community Television. The Media Center would also include classroom space. It is proposed that a "light-rail connection" could connect the Media Center with the Metropolitan State College of Denver, the fourth partner in this collaboration. Making up the fifth point is the Piton Foundation.

What the Five Points Media Center hopes to achieve is the continua-

tion of service to the multicultural audience each organization has already targeted separately. KBDI-TV programs for target audiences, usually minority audiences and under-represented groups. KUVO-FM is a Hispanic-controlled station committed to growth in minority broadcasters. Denver Community Television provides opportunities to the public in video production and program transmission via cable. Metropolitan State College is known for its commitment to the community as a learning and opportunity-based institution.

The Five Points Media Center is providing internship and volunteer opportunities to women, people of color and under-represented people. It is their hope that their alliance will attract and train more of these people for careers in TV/radio as well as create access for people to use media in their Five Points neighborhood.

For more information on the Five Points Media Center, readers can contact Joe McKeon of the Piton Foundation at (303) 825-6246 or Carol Naff, Community Outreach Manager, Denver Community Television: (303) 573-5910.

## Benton Foundation Publishes Comprehensive Media Guide Library

By Heidi Mau

The Benton Foundation, in partnership with the Center for Strategic Communications, has developed a series of publications titled *Strategic Communications for Nonprofits*. This library is designed to assist nonprofits in using communications resources to communicate effective and efficient messages.

The library consists of an introductory guide followed by 8 publications:

**Talk Radio** – a guide to using talk radio actively rather than reactively. This booklet provides a background on talk radio culture and instructions on how nonprofits might enter into that culture.

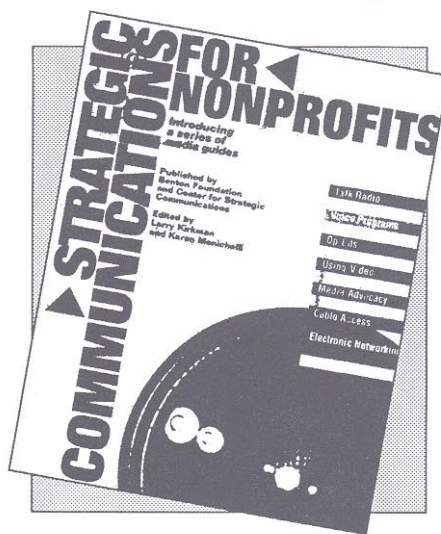
**Voice Programs** – explains the use of telephone technologies including toll-free and 900 numbers, message systems, voice mail. Includes tips on planning and buying systems.

**Ops-Eds** – "how to" booklet on creating and using opinion articles/editorials in print. Includes examples that have worked for nonprofit organizations.

**Using Video** – bringing video to the nonprofit level. Guide describes how video is used for "in-house" education as well as disseminating information about an organization.

**Media Advocacy** – subtitled "Reframing Public Debate", this publication focuses on media messages and strategies that advance a cause. Also includes a section on paid media – the benefits.

**Cable Access** – offers information on how non-profits can make use of local public access centers and public access cable stations to get their message out. Also includes a section on collaborative efforts between nonprofit organizations and cable access.



**Electronic Networking for Nonprofit Groups** – produced in conjunction with Apple Computer Community Affairs, this guide provides an explanation of electronic networking and how the nonprofit might choose and use these systems.

**Strategic Media** – Assembled by the Communications Consortium Media Center, this booklet provides a comprehensive step-by-step guide to how nonprofits can develop a strong public interest campaign utilizing various media. Includes charts and checklists.

For more information on the series *Strategic Communications for Nonprofits*, contact The Benton Foundation, 1710 Rhode Island Avenue, NW, 4th Floor, Washington, D.C. 20036, 202/857-7829.

## 1993 Advocacy Video Conference and Screenings

The Benton Foundation is hosting an Advocacy Video Conference, May 21-23, in Washington, DC. to showcase pioneer achievements, emerging uses and visions for video as an agent of social change. Public interest leaders, video producers, and foundation executives will meet to examine the unique capabilities of video as a powerful tool for advocacy.

Sessions will address the unique strengths and limitations of video: for policy advocacy and building citizens' movements; for communities to tell their stories and make their case; and the opportunities in new technologies, like desktop video and interactive multimedia.

Registration is limited to 200 participants. For further information, contact the Benton Foundation at 1710 Rhode Island Ave. NW, 4th Floor, Washington, DC 20036, or call 202/857-7829.

## Media Working Group: Creating Currency

By Dirk Koning

People traditionally think of community based on ideas of landmarks, watersheds, language, ethnicity and the soil under our feet. Commerce, religion and communication systems sprout from this heritage of fixed reality anchored in time and space. Of course our driving use of technology disturbs such realities, exploding the constraints of time with speed, collapsing space with instant communications.

Each wave of space-time compression shatters everyone's social masonry, technology becomes its own commodity, telecommunications shifts are spreading our notions of community thin, cultures are suffering as they fragment with the warping of time and space. New "communities" are being established on computer bulletin boards; videotapes lock images in space, and shift time ruthlessly; Virtual Reality creates communities with shared time and no need of shared space; the global and local interpenetrate as satellite signals blast past national borders and regulations to smear new messages, new languages and ideologies onto cathode ray screens, and into centuries-old hamlets. Who was it that said, "All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and men at last are forced to face with sober senses the real conditions of their lives, and their relations with their fellow men?"

The Media Working Group, a cooperative of video producers, activists and educators, is an organization working to face the real conditions of the "information age". Geographically based in Greater Northern Kentucky and Cincinnati, the organization exists to provide an organizational structure that allows its members and associates to experiment and collaborate in a rich environment of mutual support and freedom of expression.

The organization recognizes that producers, artists and activists need to create organizational forms that allow them to survive with political and cultural integrity as the "information age" cranks up in earnest. Media Working Group is managed cooperatively by its membership. It produces television, video art, film, photography, text, educational curricula and events. The membership and associates, who hail both nationally and internationally, all have long histories of involvement in community development, organizational and economic development.

Einstein said, "for us...the distinction of past, present and future is only an illusion, albeit a stubborn one". This postulate is unfolding into a scary new realm of truth. We rarely know any more whether "it's live or Memorex?" We can drop off into new worlds of electronic reality for a day or a lifetime. Physiological and psychological ramifications are heirs apparent. American society needs to recognize and validate these new concerns and then develop steps needed to manage them, especially in a society of capitalism and unbridled commercialism. Information trafficking and access to the highways used for routing that information may very well surface as a predominant commodity needed for human survival (slightly behind air, water and food).

Eric Utne of "Utne's Reader" recently stated, "We are awash in information - a tsunami of information; what's needed is more discussion and debate with our neighbors...It's community that we're missing." This is urgently true in countries like the United States that have taken a laissez



faire approach to developing the telecommunication infrastructure of this nation. As information has been privatized and commodified, minority voices and non-capital driven groups are forced to beg or fight for inexpensive access to the burgeoning information highways.

Commodifying information creates a kind of information currency, shifting the relative value of capital, energy and labor. If information is the currency of democracy, will your community be the mint or the panhandler? Avoiding being an information panhandler means creating organizational structures that allow people to creatively interact with the new information economy.

Media Working Group is founded on the assumption that electronic media and telecommunications have become the definitive infrastructure of the times, and that this development presents fundamental challenges to our democratic values. With this understanding, the cooperative is designed to work as an organizational platform from which producers and organizations may work out creative relationships to produce media, non-traditional media education and community development initiatives.

Last fall Media Working Group sponsored a symposium in Cincinnati, Ohio exploring issues of "Diversity, Representation and the Construction of Democratic Culture". This event was a segment of the cooperative's development of a series of intensive workshops in media production, training, politics and theory targeted for access and media centers, as well as other non-profits, grassroots and community groups.

Recent productions range from "global to local", for example, "Hybrid City", a documentary commissioned by the BBC done in association with Architects, Planners, Designers for Social Responsibility that explores the politics of creating urban space. Or "Sipiwi", a docu-poem looking at the actual and imagined prehistory and future of the Ohio River Valley. There are training videos with the Native American Prisoners Association in Kentucky as well as

a documentary on Cincinnati's venerable civil rights and peace activist, Maurice McCrackin, and "Mixed Memories", video art featuring a combination of experimental dance and oral history of Cincinnati's Over-The-Rhine district.

Almost all traditional media can now be reduced to binary coded, on/off pulses of light information traveling down fiber optic cable. The traditional media (radio, television, voice and data) converge at the speed of light here. Unfortunately regulatory and sociological environments always lag behind their technological counterparts. With exposure to the issues of information as commodity, many more activists will realize the critical need to "construct a democratic culture" by using technology as a tool of the people, to serve us, not subjugate us.

If the Global Village turns out to be a hard-wired class society, Media Working Group is the kind of "component" organization needed to allow artists and activists a means of working in such a village. They may be reached at Media Working Group, 816 Greer, Covington, KY 41011. 606/581-0033.

Dirk Koning is Executive Director of the Community Media Center, 50 Library Plaza NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503. Telephone 616/459-4788. Fax 616/459-3970. CIS E-mail 70762,541.

## Recent NAMAC Grants to Like-Minded Efforts

By Heidi Mau

Bringing opportunities to the community for media viewing and media "doing" seem to top the list of granted projects by the National Alliance of Media Arts Center's (NAMAC) 1992 Media Arts Fund. What follows are excerpts from NAMAC's Media Arts Fund 1992 Grant Recipients listing, printed recently in a NAMAC release. Perhaps these are happening in your neighborhood and could be the start of some community collaboration ideas for grants in the future. Some of the grants already involve public access organizations. The full NAMAC listing includes 50 recipients totalling \$232,500 in granted funds.

**Cultural Communications, New Orleans, LA**  
**\$3,000.00**

For operating support to sustain and expand the Subsidized Equipment Access Program, Equipment Grants Program, Neighborhood Exhibitions Program and Media Arts Educational Outreach Initiative of CCI's new operating division, the Louisiana Center for Cultural Media.

**East Bay Center for the Performing Arts, Richmond, CA**  
**\$4,500.00**

For management assistance to stabilize and develop the media department structure that provides training to youth in a multicultural community, and works with the youth to create original works relevant to their communities.

**L.A. Freewaves, Los Angeles, CA**  
**\$8,000.00**

To support the outreach program of the L.A. Freewaves Festival, a festival of independent video by a consortium of 44 arts groups, 32 cable stations and 28 schools. Outreach involves: 8 thematic one-hour cable programs and 7 traveling exhibitions selected otherwise unsubsidized curators from and to under-represented communities.

**The Living Arts and Science Center, Lexington, KY**  
**\$3,500.00**

To support a nine-month artist-in-residency program. The artist will be involved with artistic and educational classes for special populations (young mothers and emotionally disturbed youth) and will provide instruction for three 4th or 5th grade classes in a public school. Artist will provide media programming for the Center and the Lexington area at-large, which will include public screenings of student work and an Open-Air film festival on the grounds of the Center, located in an inner-city neighborhood.

**The Media Working Group, Inc., Covington, KY**  
**\$6,000.00 (see related article page 12)**

For operating support for work in education that involve workshops for media access organizations in media theory, politics and criticism; and the creation of a distribution system that will distribute the organization's productions and the works of independent producers in the region.

**Mid Peninsula Access Corporation, Palo Alto, CA**  
**\$3,000.00**

To support THE MINORITIES OUTREACH AND TRAINING PROJECT, providing a comprehensive process for African-Americans and Latinos to explore and develop dynamic ways to use public access video facilities.

**The Olympia Film Society, Olympia, WA**  
**\$4,000.00**

For general operating support the 9th annual film festival; the Passport Program, which is a partnership with area high schools and community cultural organizations, that combines film, education and local restaurants; to establish a Women's Film Fund devoted to curatorial projects which exhibit films by women directors; and to develop outreach materials to promote these exhibitions.

**Public Benefit Corporation, Detroit, MI**  
**\$6,500.00**

To support a nine week summer video production program for eight high school students from Detroit that will introduce them to video production as a medium they can utilize to express themselves to their community.

**Southern California Latina Writers and Filmmakers, Pasadena, CA**  
**\$5,000.00**

To support ARTS ACTION '92, providing a series of workshops to Latina youth in the area of writing, theater and video production.

**TV Dinner, Rochester, NY**  
**\$4,000.00**

To support the encouragement of more community-based, democratic media by holding community video training workshops, producing a monthly public access television show, providing assistance to community groups to develop public access programming, working with City Council on a more multicultural access system, and sponsoring a community film/discussion series.

**Video Data Bank, Chicago, IL**  
**\$6,000.00**

To support an audience development program that will reach specific communities that may or may not attend screenings in art institutions and/or media centers. Outreach will focus on churches, community-based organizations, minority publications, newsletters, and cultural centers.

**WDNA-FM Community Radio, Miami, FL**  
**\$6,000.00**

For general operating costs to support a community-based radio station. Programs, in six different languages, are produced by community volunteers, representing twenty different nationalities and minority groups. Station works to preserve and maintain the diverse cultures within its community, promote radio as an art form, and expose community to quality diffusion of these cultures to create a sensitivity and understanding of our diversity.

**Women in the Director's Chair, Chicago, IL**  
**\$10,000.00**

To support its programs that are dedicated to exhibiting and promoting films and videos by women artists that reflect a diversity of cultures, experiences and styles. These programs include a midwest tour of selected works from the annual festival (in 1991 the touring package screened in 12 cities); organized screenings for women in Illinois prisons; and a new project that will work with community organizations to bring films and videos made by women to young people in Chicago-area schools and community centers.

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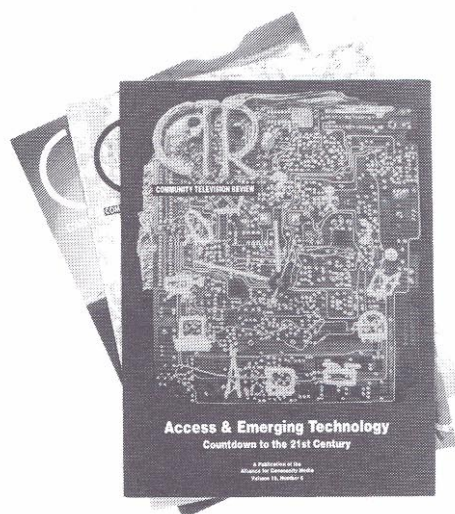
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	14:5 p. 15	Youth Get In Focus at Cable Access of Dallas
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### CTR Back Issues, Future Issues Available

A number of back issues of CTR remain available in varying quantities. Recent issues still available include:

*Access & Emerging Technology, Vol. 15, No.6*

*Access = Diversity, Vol. 15, No.5*

*1992 National Convention, Vol 15, No. 4*

*Independents, Media Artists & Access, Vol. 15, No. 3*

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*Others as available*

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For availability and ordering, contact the national office at 202/393-2650, or write Alliance for Community Media, 666 11th St. NW, Suite 806, Washington, DC 20001-4542.

CTR also accepts requests for future bulk orders at a cost of \$2 each, plus shipping and handling. Minimum orders of 25 or more. Upcoming themes include:

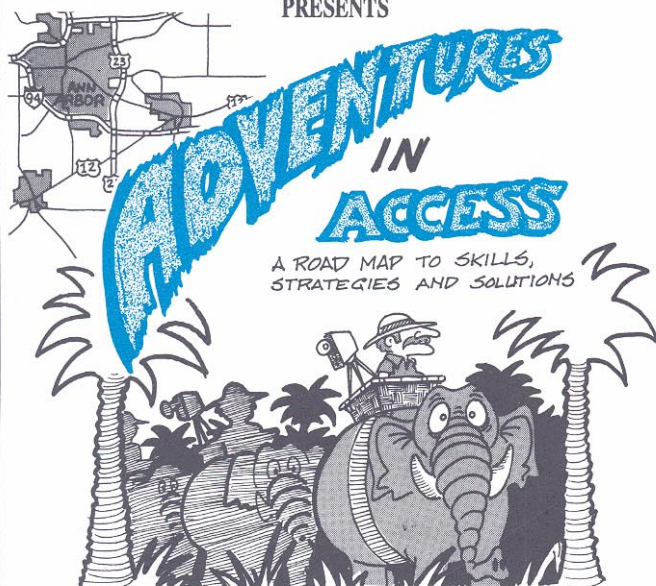
*Access & Democracy, Vol. 16, No. 2*

*Access Why & How, Vol. 16, No. 3*

*1993 National Convention, Vol.16, No. 4*

To order upcoming issues, contact Community Television Review at 616/454-6663, or write CTR, 15 Ionia SW, Suite 201, Grand Rapids, MI 49503-4113.

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#### THE UPDATED YELLOW PAGES

An indispensable directory of cable consultants and attorneys, video production equipment vendors, and additional information that includes the 1984 and 1992 Cable Acts, Alliance for Community Media members, independent media producers and distributors, related organizations and more. \$15 Alliance Members, \$20 Non-members. Return with check or money order to: Alliance for Community Media, 666 11th St. NW, Suite 806, Washington, DC 20001-4542.

#### BACK ISSUES OF CTR

Check out page 16 of this issue to order  
past issues of Community Television Review.

## ALLIANCE FOR COMMUNITY MEDIA CALL FOR DELEGATES 1993 Annual Meeting

Every year the Alliance holds its Annual Meeting at the site of the National Convention. Delegates to the Annual Meeting elect members of the Board of Directors; review, prioritize and approve policies for the organization and set goals for operation. The opening session will take place on Thursday morning, July 22 and will reconvene on Saturday afternoon, July 24, following the close of the Convention.

#### Delegates are eligible as follows:

- 1) All members of the National Board are delegates
- 2) All members of Regional Boards are delegates
- 3) Each organizational member may send one delegate.
- 4) Individual members may be elected to serve as delegates by their region.

- National and regional board members will be automatically placed on the delegate list and will receive an Annual Meeting packet in late June.

- Organizational members must send their delegate's name no later than May 30, 1993 for advance registration and Annual Meeting packet. Registrations may be sent to Kari Peterson, DCTV, 1623 5th St., Davis, CA 95616 (Attn: Alliance Delegate Registration).

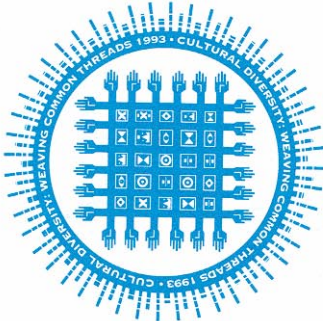
- If you are an individual member and wish to serve as a Delegate for your Region, please contact your Regional Chair for information on the Region's selection process. Your Regional Chair is responsible for getting us all Delegate names and addresses by May 30, 1993 to receive advance registration and Annual Meeting packet. A complete list of Regional Chairs appears on page 2 of this issue.

# Alliance For Community Media

(formerly the National Federation of Local Cable Programmers)

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